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this dignified. When ministers misconduct themselves, the usual mode is to admonish, rebuke, &c. until they appear penitent, and resolve to behave better in future. But here the matter seems to stand thus, "It is true we have condemned Dr. Dickson, but we have found him such a stiff, unyielding, troublesome kind of man, that we will not have any thing farther to say to

him." If the conduct of the Synod of 1812 was rash and foolish, this deliberate folly is surely much more inexcusable.

The public will now, I trust, be able to judge fairly of the whole proceedings in this case. From a regard to your very valuable publication, I send you these remarks, and am very truly yours, &c.

AN OBSERVER.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,
ENCOURAGED by your publishing sketches of the lives of the late Dr. Black, and of David Manson, I take the liberty of recommending to your consideration a sketch of the life of another of our countrymen, F. Hutcheson, L.L.D., eminent for learning and virtue. A history of his life has been published by Dr. Leechman, formerly professor and principal of the University of Glasgow; but as it has been compiled principally from memory, it seems in some parts deficient in important traits, and in others too tedious for your publication.

I cannot presume in unmeasured prose, to do justice to the character of so great a man as Dr. Hutcheson; I intend only by this attempt, from authentic documents and information, to relate such facts, as may be subjects for the pen of some of your correspondents of great talents, for elegant composition and eulogium. I am, gentlemen, your constant reader, and obedient humble servant,

M.

Belfast, 26th April, 1813.

THE grandfather of this great man, the Rev. Alex. Hutcheson,

was Presbyterian minister of Saintfield, in the county of Down; his residence was in the townland of Drumalig, which he purchased, and is still enjoyed by his lineal descendant. The place of his nativity is said to be Monkwood in Ayrshire, which his relatives in the female line still inhabit. Alexander's eldest son, the Rev. John Hutcheson, was Presbyterian minister of Armagh, and lived in Ballyrea, near that city; he married Miss Trail, of the county of Down, by whom he had two sons, Hans and Francis. Hans married Rachel Stevenson, of Killileagh, and died without issue.

The old inhabitants of Drumalig assert, that Francis was born in his grandfather's house in that townland, on the 8th of August, 1694.

Hans and Francis lived mostly with their father in Ballyrea, till the year 1702, when they were sent to their grandfather's at Drumalig, for the benefit of their education. The best classical school was then kept by Mr. Hamilton in the old Meeting-house of Saintfield; sited on a rock in the west end of the town, where the cow-fair is now held.

Even at this early period, a singular warmth of affection and benevolence appeared in Francis, which gained him the love of his fellows, and the esteem of his master and grandfather, which dispositions con-

tinued in full vigour during his whole life.

By his great genius and application he was in a short time qualified for being sent to the Rev. James Macalpin's academy in Killilagh; the character given of this learned teacher of philosophy, by writers of those days, declares his abilities and his virtues. "He hath given such proof of his abilities, and fitness for such an employment, as gives good grounds for believing, that he is able to stand the test of the most severe examination; his intimate acquaintances are satisfied, that the most severe scrutiny into his character and conduct would tend to his advantage."

Having been taught by Mr. Macalpine the ordinary course of scholastic philosophy, he removed from this academy in the year 1710 to the University of Glasgow, where he renewed with great ardour his study of the learned languages, and other parts of literature. He entered as a public student in the Natural Philosophy class. Having finished the usual course of philosophical studies, he turned his attention to divinity, which he intended should be the peculiar study and profession of his life. That he might be well qualified for such an arduous and pious course, he remained many years studying theology under the Reverend and learned Professor John Simpson.

His power of reasoning even at this early period of his life, was strong, and so accurate, that he clearly saw, that different subjects admitted of different kinds of evidence; some admit of historical evidence, some of demonstrative, and others of probable, many are founded upon induction, wherefore he disputed the propriety of Dr. Clark's attempt to demonstrate the

being and attributes of God, a priori, and that the knowledge of these was to be deduced, from our knowledge of his works. He was persuaded that attempts at demonstration, on such subjects as are incapable of it, are of very dangerous consequence to the interests of truth; because such attempts leave the mind in a state of doubt and uncertainty, and lead to scepticism.

When he had studied six years in the University of Glasgow, he returned to his own country, and passed trials for the ministry among the Dissenters. He was just about to be settled, ordained a minister, in a small Dissenting congregation in Ulster, when he received a warm invitation from some of his acquaintances, to become principal of an academy in Dublin. Friendly solicitations from different quarters generally produce considerable agitation of mind, especially when the choice appears to fix a man's situation for life. The principle of benevolence by which Hutcheson was always actuated, determined him to accept of the invitation from Dublin. He supposed that sowing the seeds of knowledge and virtue in the minds of youth, from different countries would be more generally useful than his lectures could be in a small congregation in the north. Wherefore he chose Dublin, and taught the academy in the building which yet remains at the corner where Dominic-street enters the street then called Drumcondra lane. In that station he acquitted himself with such dignity and success as gave entire satisfaction to all those who committed the youth to his care; and he soon attracted the attention of the public. Men of all ranks who had any taste for literature or esteem for learned men, sought his acquaintance and friendship. A step of the greatest importance to domestic comfort

P

and happiness was yet before him ; this he took, and was not disappointed ; he married Mary, daughter of Francis Wilson, Esq., a gentleman of estate in the county of Longford, who distinguished himself at the revolution in the service of William III. The uniform happiness of their whole conjugal state, testified the wisdom of his choice. Their only issue was Francis Hutcheson, M.D. long an eminent physician in Dublin.

His singular merit and accomplishments introduced him to the acquaintance of many men of taste and learning, and particularly to Lord Viscount Molesworth. The friendship of the Rev. Dr. Synge, then Bishop of Elphin, he always regarded as one of the greatest advantages and comforts of his life, as is expressed by his son in his dedication to him, prefixed to his father's system of Moral Philosophy.

The duties of his office were not sufficient employment for his extensive and active mind. Morals always had the chief place in his pursuits, and the public good filled up the measure of his wishes ; at this time he published his ideas of beauty and virtue, to which his modesty prevented him from prefixing his name ; but such was the reputation of the work, and the admiration of the author it excited, that Lord Grenville, then Lord Lieutenant, wishing to find the author of this excellent new publication, sent his private secretary to the printer, to inquire for the name and residence of the author of this extraordinary work ; and when he failed in this he sent a letter directed to him, wishing to be favoured with his acquaintance. The consequence of which was, that his Excellency during the whole time of his govern-

ment treated Mr. Hutcheson with distinguished marks of familiarity, esteem and friendship. His familiarity with the Powers and Bishops who then were, excited an opinion, that he had offers of great dignity and preferments in the church ; in consequence of those reports his father wrote to him from Armagh, inquiring into his intentions in those respects. His answer was, he had not taken this subject into consideration, but if he did, he would be determined by the motive which had always actuated him, the good of mankind. The events show his real intention, although two several attempts were made to prosecute Mr. Hutcheson in the Bishop's court, for daring to take upon him the education of youth, before he qualified himself by subscribing the ecclesiastical canons, and obtained licence from the Bishop. Archbishop King, author of the *Book de origine mali*, being acquainted with his abilities and merits, protected him, and assured him, he needed be under no apprehension of disturbance from that quarter, while he had power to prevent it. His contempt of those threats, and of the promises made to him, is a very satisfactory answer to the questions contained in his father's letter, respecting conformity to the ecclesiastical canons.

A few years after his *Inquiry*, his *Treatise on the Passions* was published, which added to his character as a man of erudition, ingenuity and taste. It demonstrates too, that his manner of reasoning differed from that commonly practised by moralists ; his arguments were not founded on supposition, or conjecture. His principles were the known powers and feelings of the human mind, and his demonstrations conclusive.

About the year 1729, Mr. Gersham Carmichael, the learned and worthy Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, died. Hutcheson's genius, application, and character for goodness, were not forgotten by the professors. His character for learning, and excellent method of teaching, being now established, he was unanimously chosen as successor to Mr. Carmichael, in the chair of the Ethic class.

Scarcely any man but Mr. Hutcheson, could have fixed a resolution of leaving such a numerous and learned society as he had in Dublin, by whom he was esteemed and beloved. We have seen, that even he met with opposition in his honest and inoffensive endeavours in the education of youth.

He had good reasons for refusing promotion, and discouraging the most probable schemes proposed to him for obtaining it. Neither the love of riches, nor of the elegance and grandeur of human life, prevailed so far in his breast, as to induce him to offer the least violence to his inward sentiments. He chose a quiet and retired situation, unconfined by arbitrary and unreasonable restrictions, where his studies, learning, and pfelections, would be more extensively useful, than they could be in his own country. The consequences proved the wisdom of the choice of the Regents of the College, and of his own determination. It appears, that Providence directed him to the station in life far from the highest in external distinction, yet suitable to his singular talents, and in which he had opportunities of being more eminently and extensively useful, than he could have been, in any other.

He was so much esteemed and beloved by his students in his own

country, that many accompanied him to Glasgow. Such as the late Sir John Blackwood, of Ballyleedy, in the County of Down, who remained with him an inmate, till he was thought worthy of the degree of Master of Arts; on which occasion, Sir John published a Latin thesis on civil government, a copy of which still remains at Ballyleedy. It merits the attention of every legislator, and of every man who wishes to know the principles of civil government.

When our academies in Ulster were suspended, a longer attendance at some foreign college, as a preparation for a learned profession, was more necessary than formerly. Dr. Hutcheson deemed the length of his own attendance, 6 years, sufficient. By his intimacy, friendship, and influence with Primate Boulter, he prevailed on him to make a donation to the University of Glasgow, of an annual fund, for any young man who had studied there three years, and taken Master's degrees in Glasgow College, and who intended to be qualified for any of the learned professions.

Although Dr. Hutcheson was not obliged, as in Dublin, to teach the Languages, but was confined, principally, to Natural Theology. Ethics properly so called, and Jurisprudence, yet he lectured and examined his pupils two days in the week upon a certain portion of Cicero's works, as his treatises *de officiis* and *de finibus*. He lectured every sabbath evening upon the truth of the Christian religion. He composed too, for the benefit of his pupils, a compend of his lectures, in such elegant Latin, as is inferior to none of the modern compositions, in that language. He published, in the same language, a compend of Metaphysics, comprehending Natural Theology, and a compend of Logic,

which afford convincing proofs of his accurate knowledge of the human mind, and likewise of his knowledge of the ancient moralists and metaphysicians.

His doctrines are founded neither upon conjecture nor upon occult qualities, nor upon the fitness nor reason of *things*, but upon the known sentiments, affections, and passions of the human mind. The principle of approbation he conceived, was a distinct feeling from reason, which he denominated the moral sense, which was afterwards called sentiment by Dr. Smith, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and moral faculty, by Reid, in his *Treatise upon the Mind*.

He has placed supreme virtue, and excellence of a human character, in such exercise of all the good affections to God and man, as will restrain all our appetites and passions within proper bounds, and direct us in the course of action which will promote the happiness of mankind in the most extensive manner. This scheme pre-supposes, that we are by our moral faculties under real and internal obligations of promot-

ing the good of mankind, even at the expense of life itself, and all its enjoyments; or, in a word, we are enjoined to lay down our lives for the brethren: that the moral sense never fails to give the warmest and highest degree of approbation to every instance of truly disinterested virtue, and that the degree of moral sentiment is in proportion to the degree of disinterestedness of an action. According to this representation, the soul of man resembles the divine intelligence in his rational faculties, and the divine benignity in his social and public affections. His doctrines were not the offspring of the imagination, they proceeded from feeling and conviction. They were verified in his own conduct, which consisted in a series of actions, founded upon the most pure affections, and disinterested benevolence.

He thus spent a benevolent and pious life about 16 years in the University.

In 1745, in the fifty-first year of his age, after a few days of fever, it pleased All Wise Providence to cut him off, to the regret of the lovers of learning and of virtue.

DETACHED ANECDOTES AND OBSERVATIONS.

MOTIVE FOR LEARNING THE CATECHISM.

MR. JOHN HALES relates the following anecdote in one of his letters to Sir Dudley Carleton, from the Synod of Dort. The question of catechising was then in agitation. "Doubtless," says he, in the letter of 19—29 November, 1618, "the most effectual way of all the rest to bring young persons to learn their catechism, was that which was related by one of the

Helvetic deputies. For he told us that in his country the manner was, that all young persons that meant to marry, were to repair, both he and she, unto their minister, a little before they meant to marry, and by him to be examined how well they had couched the catechism: if they had not done it perfectly to his mind, he had power to defer their marriage until they had better learned their lessons.

"I was much affected," he adds,